CUBA

Castro's Propaganda Apparatus and Foreign Policy

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PREFACE

This paper is an in-depth examination of Castro's propaganda apparatus, but it is not all-inclusive. A number of the apparatus' lesser elements have been omitted for sake of brevity, and no mention has been made of Havana's extensive use of foreign aid to enhance the Castro regime's image. The major branches of the propaganda mill, however, are discussed in sufficient detail to give the reader an adequate appreciation of the size and sophistication of one of Havana's most important foreign policy tools.

Key Judgments

Cuban President Fidel Castro has long considered propaganda to be one of the most potent weapons in his foreign policy arsenal. His use of the few propaganda assets available to him—personal interviews with journalists, radio broadcasts and special publicity-seeking operations—during his guerrilla war against Batista contributed in a major way to his victory and was a preview of the methods he would use so successfully after coming to power.

Immediately after assuming power, he set about creating a propaganda empire that today is perhaps the most effective in the hemisphere and has connections worldwide. The empire is directed by a clique made up of Castro and his old guerrilla comrades; this ensures a permanent antipathy toward democratic nations that the Castro government seeks to undermine.

This network consists of a global news agency, international broadcasting facilities, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, front groups, "friendship" institutes, sports and cultural activities, and a wide variety of miscellaneous organizations.

Cuba's news service has 36 offices around the world, transmits stories in four languages, and publishes a variety of magazines and news periodicals that are disseminated to readers in numerous Western and Third World nations. Cuba's broadcast facilities include eight transmitters on the island—ranging up to 100 kilowatts—and two transmitters in the USSR. Shortwave broadcasting alone exceeds 400 hours weekly in eight languages to Europe, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. The Cuban Institute for Friendship Among Peoples (ICAP) is designed to organize in foreign countries associations that are responsive to direction from Havana. There are now 113 such associations throughout the world.

The Castro regime constructed a $25 million Palace of Conventions in Havana to host international gatherings designed to focus world opinion on specific issues or to promote Cuban prestige. In addition, Cuban cultural institutions such as the Casa de las Américas have effectively mobilized many Latin American intellectuals—many of them prestigious—in support of the Cuban revolution. Cuba's publishing houses have turned out some 17,000 titles and over 500 million copies of books and pamphlets, a significant amount being propaganda. Cuban books are now distributed in more than 60 countries.

Castro's propaganda successes are impressive. The two most impressive achievements are: (1) Despite severe economic shortcomings in

his country, he has been able to project such a favorable image of Cuba that Third World leaders see it as a model for other developing countries. (2) Despite relentless meddling abroad, he has been able to convince many influential individuals that he is willing to abide by correct standards of international behavior.

It is clear from Cuban Government statements that propaganda will continue to be a major priority and will expand in certain key areas. Although economic constraints will hamper this effort, we are likely to see new investments made to:

- Improve the availability of Cuban books and magazines abroad.
- Open new bureaus of Cuba's international news agency and increase the number of subscribers for that news agency's services.
- Help allies develop their own propaganda outlets for both domestic and international audiences.
- Train foreign journalists to make the most of their skills and opportunities in non-Marxist countries.
- Establish and promote ostensibly independent news-gathering and professional organizations of leftists to provide competition for—and reduce the influence of—Western news agencies, journalists, and radio stations.

In our view, the bitterly pro-Marxist bias of Castro's propaganda apparatus will not change because it mirrors his own deep-seated antipathy towards democratic governments. Although he may, from time to time, have the apparatus temper its invective, such a muting so far has always proved to be temporary. Basically he expects the propaganda machine to promote Soviet/Cuban policies and to counter anti-Communist (anti-Castro) trends on a day-to-day basis. In addition, he intends to use it to produce a broad, permanent body of literature that, through its scholarship, eloquence, and sheer volume, will influence current and future generations of Latin Americans. Castro probably expects this growing body of literature to cause problems for democratic nations long after he himself is out of the picture.

Castro's propaganda mills have sometimes made mistakes. Radio Havana's selective reporting on Peru's Maoist Sendero Luminoso guerrilla group, for example, has angered the Peruvian Government. Despite these occasional lapses, however, the Cuban propaganda machine, enjoying close association with its Soviet counterpart, ample funding, and competent personnel, will remain an important negative factor working against democratic interests, worldwide.

Historical Perspective: In the Sierra Maestra

Instinct for Publicity

Fidel Castro's instinct for the value of international propaganda served him spectacularly as early as February 1957, two months after his infiltration of eastern Cuba by sea. His group of 82 insurgents had been reduced through combat and desertions to a hard core of only 18, and government control of the media left most Cubans with the impression that the insurgency had failed and that Castro was dead. To overcome the censorship barrier and embarrass the Batista administration, Castro sent a messenger to Havana to invite a foreign journalist to meet with him in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba. The journalist picked for the task was Hebert Matthews of the *New York Times*.

In three articles resulting from his brief encounter with Castro, Matthews gave an almost heroic impression of the Cuban revolutionary, describing him as "the flaming symbol of the opposition to the regime" and boldly predicted that "from the looks of things, General Batista cannot possibly hope to suppress the Castro revolt"—a judgment made at a time when the insurgent band consisted only of 18 poorly armed, half-starved men on the run.

A political bombshell, the *Times* articles, with their photographic evidence of the historic meeting, gave the lie to Batista's insistence that Castro was dead, overstated the strength of the insurgent band (thanks to Castro's deliberate efforts to deceive Matthews), and gave the insurgents vital international exposure. Castro's comrade-in-arms, Che Guevara, recalled two years later: "At the time, the presence of a foreign journalist, preferably an American, was more important to us than a military victory." Within a month of the Matthews interview the band of 18 had grown to about 80. For his support, Matthews was later decorated by Castro.

The intermediaries who had arranged the Matthews trip later set up a similar propaganda exercise with the Columbia Broadcasting System. The resulting television documentary, which included a dramatic interview with Castro atop the highest mountain peak in Cuba, further enhanced the rebels' romantic image.

Radio Rebelde

The second phase of Castro's propaganda war against Batista opened a year later on Cuba's independence day with a rebel radio located in Che Guevara's headquarters in the Sierra Maestra began nightly broadcasts on shortwave. The use of shortwave, which meant it could not be heard in eastern Cuba itself, suggests it was intended as much for listeners abroad as for those on the island. Castro's first speech

on Radio Rebelde suggests the same; he opened by appealing "to public opinion in Cuba and to the free peoples of Latin America," and criticized democratic governments, leaders, and parties of the region for their tolerance of the Batista dictatorship.*

A popular Venezuelan station began taping the rebel broadcasts and replaying them on mediumwave—clearly audible in eastern Cuba at night—which was, according to the insurgent radio's engineer, a source of great satisfaction in the rebel camp. Another important Venezuelan broadcaster later did the same on both mediumwave and shortwave and eventually stations in Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, and even Argentina were involved in the retransmissions.

By late 1968, Radio Rebelde's nightly broadcasts could be heard throughout the Caribbean Basin and were clearly audible in Washington, D.C. Thus, Radio Rebelde, powered by less than 150 watts, became a major factor in putting Batista on the defensive internationally and in creating a heroic portrait of Castro.

Castro's Press Club

Radio Rebelde was only part of Castro's campaign. Journalists from a number of countries were invited to repeat the Matthews experience. One of Buenos Aires' most influential radio stations sent Jorge Ricardo Masetti to the Sierra Maestra in April 1958. His "instant" book about his trip, *Those Who Fight and Those Who Weep*, introduced Castro to Argentina (Figure 1). Masetti was so captivated that he later returned to Cuba to organize Castro's international press agency and, in 1963, using the alias Comandante Segundo, Masetti died trying to launch a guerrilla war in his homeland.

* For an in-depth review of the Cuban propaganda apparatus in the early years of the revolution, see *Family Portrait with Fidel* by Carlos Franqui.



Figure 1. Argentine journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti, seen here (center) with Castro's guerrilla forces in the Sierra Masetra in 1958, later became the first director of Castro's news agency Prensa Latina.

Masetti was preceded into the Sierra Maestra by reporter Enrique Meneses, whose reporting on this trip appeared in articles in *Paris Match*. The French magazine's greatest international competitor, *Look* magazine, had already published an interview with Castro in which Fidel—with an eye for his US audience—pledged to hold "a truly honest election" and disclaimed any intention of nationalizing foreign investments.

During this same period in early 1958, Castro hosted an Uruguayan journalist and another *New York Times*' reporter. Foreign journalists were visiting with such frequency that a sign reading "Press Club," in English and Spanish, was placed on the rude hut where the foreign visitors were received at insurgent headquarters, and Che Guevara jokingly referred to it as "the most exclusive press club in the world."

Headline Grabbers

In addition to entertaining international journalists during early 1958, the insurgents carried out special paramilitary operations designed both to attract the press and to heap scorn on Batista's security forces. The insurgents' urban apparatus, for example, kidnapped world-famous Argentine race car driver Juan Manuel Fangio from a Havana hotel in broad daylight. Fangio—in Cuba for the Gran Premio contest—was released unharmed after the race had started, but gained points for his captors by commenting favorably on the treatment he had received.

A second kidnapping, carried out in late June 1958, involved a busload of about 30 US sailors and marines, who were held until mid-July. The aims were to pressure Batista to halt indiscriminate air bombings of villages in guerrilla territory, to prod the US into making demands on Batista to rescue US personnel which Batista could not fulfill and thus would discredit him and to alert the US public to the savagery with which the Batista forces were pursuing the civil war.

Through his broadcasts, his careful cultivation of foreign journalists, and his propaganda-oriented paramilitary operations, Castro succeeded in internationalizing the conflict. Besides arousing broad international sympathy, his efforts yielded tangible benefits. His propaganda campaign almost certainly played an important part in the US decision in March 1958 to suspend arms shipments to the Batista government. It also elicited important support in arms and money from abroad.

Structure for Media Management

Castro's Personal Control

Once in power, Castro began organizing what is today an international media empire unmatched by other Latin America countries. As in other Communist countries, this empire is tightly controlled by the

Cuban Communist Party's Political Bureau, the regime's highest policy-making body. This network consists of such organizations as radio stations, a news agency with offices around the globe, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, front groups, "friendship" institutes, professional associations, as well as ad hoc devices, including international meetings, sham tribunals, cultural displays, speaking tours, and literary contests—all of which are dedicated to promoting the Cuban line and denigrating the non-Communist world in general and individual countries when it is in Cuban interest to do so. Some operate overtly as acknowledged organs of the Cuban Government while others are fronts ostensibly free of Cuban influence. The efforts of this vast party-controlled apparatus are carefully synchronized with and supplemented by the personal efforts of Castro and other top Cuban officials, who use their perogatives of office and their considerable powers of persuasion to sway foreign figures of influence and exploit the non-Cuban media.

Topping this media monolith is Castro himself. His concern for propaganda nuances is so great that he sometimes visits the editorial offices of the party's daily newspaper *Granma* late at night to review the next day's edition or direct the exact placement of a story. Castro also sometimes drops into the headquarters of Cuba's international news agency, Prensa Latina, to make a statement that he wants disseminated abroad as a response to quick-breaking events. On subjects of extreme sensitivity—usually dealing with the United States—he does not hesitate to write unattributed editorials. Over the years he has consistently demonstrated a keen personal interest in how news is presented, always trying to gain the maximum political benefit from it.

Castro's chief political officer, Antonio Perez Herrero, a Political Bureau alternate member who functions as party secretary for ideology, oversees day-to-day operations of the media empire ensuring that it accurately reflects Castro's thinking (Figure 2). A guerrilla veteran, he



Figure 2. Guerrilla veteran Antonio Pérez Herrero oversees Castro's propaganda empire.

rose quickly in Raúl Castro's Armed Forces Ministry after the revolution to become a vice minister and chief political officer for the entire military establishment.

Revolutionary Orientation Department

Pérez Herrero exerts control over the media empire through the Revolutionary Orientation Department, an office of the party's Central Committee charged with establishing ideological guidelines and ensuring that they are followed. The Department Chief, Orlando Fundora López, has served in this position since September 1967 and is directly subordinate to Pérez Herrero (Figure 3). According to press reports, it is not unusual for either or both to accompany Castro on trips abroad to ensure that his tight control of the media is not loosened by distance.

Fundora's department includes *Granma*, which in addition to its daily schedule for domestic consumption, publishes three weekly editions—in Spanish, English, and French—for distribution abroad. The department's radio, television and documentary film section controls domestic broadcasting as well as Radio Havana shortwave and La Voz de Cuba mediumwave for external audiences. Its press section supervises the international news agency, Prensa Latina, and its domestic counterpart, Agencia Informativa Nacional. It also has history, publications, and publicity sections as well as several others.

Components of the Apparatus

Prensa Latina

Perhaps the most effective Cuban propaganda weapon is Prensa Latina, which not only disseminates a daily stream of propaganda



Figure 3. Orlando Fundora López, former director of Radio Havana, has been chief of the Central Committee's Revolutionary Orientation Department since it was formed in 1965.

hostile to democratic nations, but also serves as a cover for intelligence collection and operations; on occasion it fills a diplomatic function by using branch offices as de facto embassies.

According to the authors of a Cuban history of the agency, the idea for Prensa Latina was born at the time of Operation Truth in mid-January 1959 when Castro, complaining of a conspiracy against him and his revolution by the international news agencies, gathered more than 500 foreign journalists and news photographers, mostly from Latin America, in Havana to try to overcome the bad press that resulted from a wave of executions immediately following his victory over Batista. The high point of Operation Truth occurred on 22 January when Castro met with the assembled army of newspersons.

In condemning the Western wire services, he lamented that "we don't have (our own) international wire services. You Latin American journalists have no other choice but to accept what the (US and European) wire services tell you. The Latin American press ought to have the means that would permit it to know the truth and not be victim of the lie." He urged the journalists to become involved: "Do you journalists want to help the oppressed? Well, you have a formidable weapon in your hand: continental public opinion. Use it and you will see how you can help to liberate people and save many lives."

On hand for Castro's spectacular press conference were Carlos María Gutiérrez and Jorge Ricardo Masetti, two pro-Castro journalists whose radical bona fides had been established during their visit to Che Guevara's "press club" in the Sierra Maestra in 1958. Responding to a personal invitation from Che, they had returned to Cuba from Buenos Aires in early January 1959 and had helped Castro prepare for Operation Truth. Following Castro's plea, they prepared for groundwork for what six months later was to become Prensa Latina.

In April 1959, Mexican industrialist Guillermo Castro Ulloa arrived in Havana to conclude the preparations for the agency, later becoming its first president. On 9 June, it was formally inaugurated and on 16 June—with Masetti as its director general—Prensa Latina began its first transmission to subscribers abroad.

By the end of the year, Prensa Latina had, in addition to its service in Spanish for Latin America, a transmission in English for Egypt's Middle East News Agency and Yugoslovia's Tanyug News Agency. Its Spanish transmissions were also directed to Czechoslovakia for CTK and to Poland for PAP. A year after its creation, Prensa Latina had branch offices in Washington, New York, London, Paris, Geneva and Prague, as well as in all countries of Latin America except Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. By the end of 1972, it boasted of two national and 12 international radio circuits and an average daily transmission

total of 2,500 news dispatches. In 1975, it began a Quechua Indian language news service for Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

Today, Prensa Latina transmits in four languages—Spanish, Portuguese, English and French—on shortwave to all parts of the world—its news in Spanish is on the air 18 hours a day—and provides additional transmissions in undetermined languages on satellite facilities. It has 36 branch offices in major cities of the world from Tokyo and Luanda to Moscow and Buenos Aires. It boasts a special services department that offers a variety of journalistic support materials, including: photographic packages of events or personalities; compilations of basic data for background presentations; recorded interviews with leading political, cultural, and sports figures; political or economic commentaries on a single country or an entire region by experienced observers; and feature articles on virtually any subject that a newspaper or magazine would be interested in publishing. These made-to-order services can be provided in Spanish, French, or English.

Prensa Latina also publishes its own magazines and news periodicals. Its monthly 64-page *Prisma Latinoamericano*, with a format designed to compete with *Time*, has a Spanish edition sold in Spain and nine countries of Latin American, and a Portuguese edition for Portugal, Brazil and five African countries. *Prisma*'s news items and illustrations invariably have an anti-Free World slant intended to condition its readers to view non-Communist economic and political institutions as the source of all the world's ills. Its half- and full-page advertisements for products of major Spanish and Portuguese manufacturers lend it respectability. Begun in May 1975 (Portuguese edition in 1981), *Prisma* is staffed by some of Prensa Latina's most professional and effective propagandists. An English-language version of *Prisma* first appeared in September 1982. Printed in Prague through agreement with CTK, it is avowedly aiming for distribution in the US, Canada, Great Britain, Japan, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, South Yemen, Tanzania, Nigeria, Libya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

A companion to *Prisma* is *Cuba Internacional*, a large-format 72-page monthly in Spanish that relies on illustrations and feature articles, many of which are devoted to presenting an optimistic picture of life in Cuba or lauding the exploits of Cuban aid missions abroad and Cuban sports teams in international competition. Like *Prisma*, it is consistently pro-Communist, pro-Cuba. *Cuba Internacional* is distributed in Spain, Portugal, Angola, and nine countries of Latin America. It also has a Russian-language edition for the USSR.

In addition, Prensa Latina publishes *Pel*, or *Panorama Econômico Latinoamericano*, a 16-page, fortnightly publication in Spanish that provides articles on the "the principal international economic problems

. . . with special attention to themes related to Asia, Africa, and Latina America." The Prensa Latina office in Prague, Czechoslovakia, publishes *Latin American Roundup* (*Síntesis Latinoamericana*), a twice-weekly wrap-up of events in Latin American in both an English and a Spanish edition. Also in English and Spanish editions is *Direct from Cuba*, a fortnightly, 30-page Prensa Latina product that aims "to place at the reach of progressive publications all over the globe the most important, permanent, and current information from our network of correspondents in Cuba, Latin America, and other parts of the world." Prensa Latina and the Soviet Novosti news agency office in Havana jointly publish *Integración Económica Socialista*, a monthly, 12-page collection of articles on the economic activities of the countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CEMA); it is basically a public relations vehicle for CEMA.

Prensa Latina facilities are not used exclusively for journalistic purposes. When Havana closed its embassy in Caracas in 1980 and withdrew its diplomatic personnel from Venezuela, for example, the Prensa Latina office there assumed diplomatic functions. The same occurred in Bogota in 1981 when Colombia suspended relations with Cuba.*

International Broadcasts

Before Castro came to power, Cuba had no international shortwave broadcasting service. Today, the Castro regime has Radio Havana, an official government entity that, according to regular observations, broadcasts over 400 hours per week on shortwave in eight languages to the countries of Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa, and the Americas. From a single low-powered transmitter inaugurated in 1961, Radio Havana has grown into one of the leaders of the Third World in the field of international broadcasting. It now has at least eight transmitters in Cuba ranging up to 100 kilowatts in power, and also used two transmitters in the USSR. (The use of Radio Moscow's transmitters to beam Cuban broadcasts to Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa complements Soviet use of two Cuban shortwave transmitters for Radio Moscow transmissions to Latin America.) No other government in Latin America has a comparable international broadcasting service.

Radio Havana's service on shortwave is supplemented by La Voz de Cuba, on mediumwave, which broadcasts approximately 38 hours per week for Spanish-speaking listeners in the US and in the countries bordering the Caribbean. A parallel service in English—The Voice of Cuba—and retransmission of Radio Moscow's English service for North

* Prensa Latina, in addition to collecting intelligence, is sometimes used for covert operations. In Caracas in 1977, for example, Prensa Latina officials worked to help form a committee to support the Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua. This front solicited contributions for the guerrillas and tried to give the impression that the guerrillas enjoyed broad popular support in Venezuela.

America were broadcast by some of Cuba's strongest mediumwave transmitters, including at least one of 150 kilowatts, until late 1981 when both were taken off the air; their removal presumably was intended to deny Washington the opportunity to use retaliation as grounds for justifying the initiation of US broadcasts to Cuba on mediumwave over the proposed Radio Martí.

The Castro regime has a long history of involvement in subversive broadcasting efforts. Castro's victory over Batista was less than a month old before Cuban commercial broadcasting stations began beaming programs abroad calling openly for revolution in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. As Castro's sponsorship of guerrilla warfare in other countries grew in 1959-1963, clandestine insurgent radio stations proliferated. Their links to Cuba were virtually impossible to prove, but circumstantial evidence frequently indicated Cuban involvement. For example, one short-lived clandestine shortwave station—Radio Rebelde de Nicaragua—carried little else but slanted news provided by Prensa Latina.

On other occasions, Cuban complicity was obvious. In one such incident, for example, one of Radio Havana's shortwave transmitters was temporarily taken out of service, and on its frequency there appeared a "clandestine" radio that displayed technical characteristics that were unique to the Radio Havana transmitter. The station's pretense that it was broadcasting from the Dominican Republic was belied by its inability to provide timely news of fast-breaking events taking place there. When the radio ceased its transmissions, Radio Havana resumed its broadcasts on the same frequency.

More recently, Cuba has been linked to broadcasters in Costa Rica and, until recently, Grenada, as well as to clandestine radios associated with Salvadoran insurgents. Radio Noticias del Continente, a shortwave radio that broadcasts openly from San Jose until closed by the Costa Rican Government in early 1981, regularly attacked the Governments of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Guatemala, and El Salvador—at the time, all standard targets of Cuban propaganda. On the air for over a year, Radio Noticias was eventually found to be propaganda outlet of the Montoneros, an Argentine terrorist group that, for years has had close ties to Havana. Radio Noticias' closure evoked a bitter attack from Radio Havana, which suggests that the Castro regime had placed a high value on—and was secretly involved in—its operation.

While Havana's links to Radio Noticias were covert, the Cuban association with Radio Free Grenada was open. Cuban communications technicians arrived in Grenada in May 1979, only two months after Maurice Bishop seized power, and, according to press reports, in June 1980 the two countries arranged for Cuban assistance in the repair and upgrading of Radio Free Grenada. Cuba provided a 75 kilowatt

mediumwave transmitter—50 percent more powerful than the strongest commercial mediumwave broadcasting station in the US—and Cuban technicians installed it along with a 400-foot transmitting tower and ancillary equipment. Havana provided scholarships for training Grenadian students who were to maintain and operate the new equipment, which was inaugurated on 13 March 1982, the third anniversary of Bishop's takeover.

Presumably to support Radio Free Grenada's newscasts, Havana inaugurated Prensa Latina press transmissions in English to the eastern Caribbean. According to a press release from the Cuban Embassy in Georgetown, the Cuban Radio-Television Institute also provided Radio Free Grenada with programming in the fields of culture, sports, the sciences, and music. The extent of Cuban support for Radio Free Grenada suggested a high degree of confidence in Havana that the station would function as a Cuban propaganda surrogate in the eastern Caribbean.

Cuba's interest in clandestine broadcasting stations is currently evident in its collaboration with the Salvadoran insurgents. According to an analysis by an agency that regularly monitors Havana and the insurgent radios, "Havana regularly provides a forum for the rebels' three regularly clandestine radios stations by replaying the radios' political commentaries, military communiques, and news bulletins." Cuban foreknowledge of these radios' operations over the past two years has been proved on three occasions: the Cuban media gave advance publicity for the guerrillas' Radio Venceremos before it began broadcasting in January 1981, for Radio Farabundo Marti before it came on the air on January 1982, and for Radio Guazapa before it started broadcasts on 21 February 1983. Last February, Radio Havana admitted openly that Radio Venceremos maintains a representative in Havana.

In light of the high value the Castro regime has always placed on insurgent broadcasting and considering the material support it has provided the Salvadoran rebels for years, it seems safe to assume that Cuba's guerrilla warfare training schools have been used to teach Salvadorans to operate and maintain clandestine radios and that Cuban party schools have provided instruction on the techniques of propaganda.

ICAP

The Cuban Institute for Friendship Among Peoples (ICAP) was established on 30 December 1960 in the midst of a major Cuban campaign to mobilize popular sentiment in Latin America and Europe against the anticipated counterrevolutionary invasion from the United States. The new organization, according to the law creating it, was

founded "to stimulate and facilitate the visit to Cuba of the representatives of the popular and progressive sectors of all the countries of the world that show interest in learning firsthand the economic and social changes and the works carried out by the Cuban revolution" and to assist the groups—such as the US-based Fair Play for Cuba Committee—that had been formed in other countries to publicly demonstrate support for the Castro regime.

One of ICAP's first tasks was to organize foreigners in Cuba into associations based on country of origin, such as the Union of Peruvians in Cuba, the Cuban-Spanish Friendship Society, the Cuban-Venezuelan Institute of Revolutionary Solidarity, the Cuban-Brazilian Friendship Committee, and the Association of Guatemalans Residing in Cuba. This provided Cuban intelligence services with a registry of aliens who might prove useful for intelligence collection efforts and operations in their homelands, and serve as a structure for mobilizing foreign nationals in demonstrations against the policies of their own governments. Every Latin American diplomatic mission in Havana knew it would face an ICAP-sponsored parade of its own nationals marching and shouting outside the embassy walls if frictions developed with Cuba's revolutionary government.

Subsequently, ICAP, establishing contacts with intellectuals abroad, arranged for them to form local "friendship" associations responsive to directives from Havana. Colombian author León de Greif, for example, organized the Colombian-Cuban Friendship Association in Bogota and was its first president, while Culture Ministry official Robin Ravales "Dobru," touted as the "national poet of Suriname," heads the Suriname-Cuba Friendship Association in Paramaribo.

There are now 113 such associations throughout the world, according to ICAP president René Rodríguez Cruz. In a statement last year, he described them as being made up of writers, artists, journalists, civil rights workers, student and labor leaders, politicians of various ideological stripes, men and women in the religious life, and others. They "are those who are charged with refuting in their respective countries the distorted version that North American imperialism presents of our social work and our internationalist assistance to other peoples."

Rodríguez Cruz boasted that through these associations "we are related to the broadest social, political, cultural, and mass sectors in every part of the globe." ICAP's goal, he said, is "to establish a mechanism of communications between the various social strata of a given country, a mechanism that is quick and flexible, without formality or protocol." ICAP, then, is highly opportunistic, eagerly welcoming propaganda support from all sources, even those that might be ideologically incompatible.

In his interview, Rodríguez Cruz admitted openly that ICAP-sponsored friendship associations carry out their propaganda activities according to prearranged work plans coordinated with Havana and depend on Havana for material support. He stressed the "fluid and systematic interchange" that Cuban officials had with the leadership of these associations. He also confirmed Havana's links with—and catalytic role in—the West European peace movement by saying that: ". . . we have directed the (friendship) associations abroad to . . . establish broad links with the whole movement that is prompting actions in defense of peace. And we can say, without fear of error, that many of them are carrying out precisely those instructions." He bragged that "when a great peace movement began in West Germany, the first banner that waved, carried by the demonstrators, had the initials of ICAP printed on it." Cuba thus acknowledges that in effect the 113 friendship associations abroad are directed from Havana and act on its instructions.

In addition to aligning themselves with broadly based political organizations such as the peace and antinuclear weapons movements, the friendship associations distribute Cuban-supplied propaganda, publish their own pro-Cuban literature, serve as unofficial spokesmen for the government in Havana, defend Cuban policy in the local press, and carry out marches and other demonstrations to focus local attention on issues that Havana wants to exploit. Even when these activities involve very few people and have no measurable impact locally, they are duly reported throughout the hemisphere by Radio Havana, Prensa Latina, and Cuban newspapers and magazines, and thus promote an exaggerated impression of substantial popular sentiment in favor of Cuban policy and against US interests.

Bringing foreign groups to Cuba for propaganda exploitation is another part of ICAP's job. The Nordic Brigade made up mostly of young Scandinavians, the Venceremos Brigade from the US, the Antonio Maceo Brigade of young Cuban exiles most of whom live in the US, and the José Martí Brigade of West Europeans all make regular pilgrimages to Cuba to engage in "constructive work"—usually symbolic cane cutting or manual labor in the field of construction—and to be rewarded with a guided tour of the island. The groups from the US are usually portrayed by the Cuban media as typical of the idealistic youth who have rejected the anti-Castro political judgments of Washington; in reality, according to accounts by some of these young visitors, Cuban authorities are wary of the drug problem these people sometimes bring with them to Cuba and considerable effort is made to isolate the members of the brigades to keep them from "contaminating" the Cuban population.

Casa de las Américas

Judging from their own writings and statements, Latin America's intellectuals—including many who had been persecuted by dictatorial regime in their own countries—took vicarious satisfaction from Batista's downfall and constituted a continent-wide supply of literary and artistic talent waiting to be tapped on revolution's behalf. To help harness the considerable propaganda potential of this influential segment of Latin American society, Castro founded the Casa de las Américas in April 1959, less than four months after he assumed power. The Casa quickly established itself as an influential literary institution (Figure 4). For its first 12 years, it sponsored annual Latin American theater festivals and in 1965 began publishing a theatrical journal called *Conjunto*. In September 1959, it organized the "Festival Comprensión Cuba" for

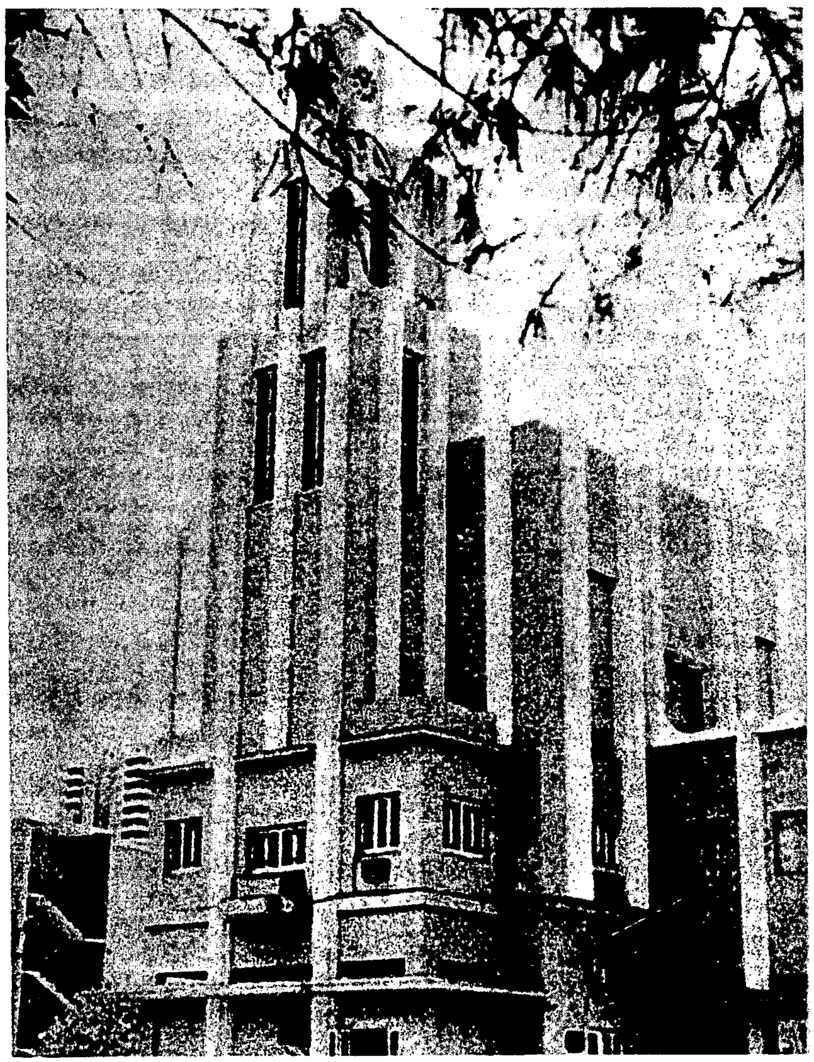


Figure 4. Casa de las Américas in Havana is a focal point for Latin America's intellectuals.

Latin American writers and used the occasion to publish five books. That same month, it established its own José Antonio Echeverría Library, which specializes in Latin American studies, and held a series of conferences on the "American Policy of the Revolution" attended by prominent cultural and political figures.

In 1960, the Casa organized what we believe has become one of its most important political vehicles, the annual literary contest that awards monetary prizes to Latin American poets, writers, and playwrights in various categories of literature. The "testimony" category for autobiographical writings, for example, has been particularly useful for calling public attention to memoirs of those in the region willing to relate the experiences of urban or rural guerrilla fighters. The 1970 prize, for example, went to Argentine journalist María Esther Gilio for her book *The Tupamaro Guerrillas*. Prize-winning works are often published by the Casa, giving added prestige and exposure to the author. In the mid-1970s, when the Castro regime began paying greater heed to the former British colonies in the Caribbean, the Casa added to the annual competition a special category for authors from the English-speaking Caribbean territories and still later included a French-language category for authors from Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana.

In June-July 1960, the Casa began publishing its literary journal, *Casa de las Amêricas*, which serves as a vehicle for shorter works by the region's poets and writers. Published six times a year, it also has a book review section that publicizes books with the appropriate political slant, and conversely, provides a platform for challenging those not favored. A lengthy news column alerts the reader to coming cultural events and details those that have already taken place; as with the magazine in general, political content—which supports the Cuban view—appear to be a major criterion for selection of material appearing in the column.

In addition to publishing the works of some of the winners of the annual competition, Casa publishes book-length material by authors whose literary efforts are deemed worthy of broad exposure. Perhaps the most famous example was Regis Debray's *Revolution within the Revolution?*, published in 1967 just in time for the failure of the guerrilla operation it was meant to complement—Guevara's Bolivian disaster. Other Casa books, such as Gerard Pierre Charles' *Haiti: The Uninterrupted Crisis*, are designed to establish the historical justification for a rebellion that destroys all political, economic, and social institutions in a country and replaces them with "socialist" institutions.

Until her suicide in 1980, the president of the Casa was Haydee Santamaria, a self-effacing heroine of the Cuban revolution who always maintained that she herself was not an intellectual. If her cultural bona fides were wanting, her credentials as a revolutionary were impeccable.

She was a member of Castro's rebel force that attacked the Moncada Army barracks on 26 July 1953—a futile assault that left both her brother and her fiance dead of torture and herself a prisoner—and later worked in the underground in support of Castro's guerrilla war. Her daring revolutionary experiences and her tragic personal losses made her a particularly appealing, dramatic figure for the region's intellectuals, many of whom could relate to her sufferings.

During her tenure as its president, the Casa served the Castro regime effectively by marshaling supportive cultural activity and helping create acceptance of Cuban revolutionary ideology. It made a major contribution to the formation of a sizable body of literature that helped to reshape popular conceptions of armed struggle, dramatize it, and try to make it respectable. Revolution became synonymous with idealism, and intellectuals, caught up emotionally, left their normal pursuits to take up guns.

Author-journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti, for example, left Cuba to die in Argentina in 1963 at the head of a guerrilla band; Peruvian poet Javier Heraud and a group of young Peruvian intellectuals, according to Havana's own admission, left Cuba to die in their homeland in 1963 while trying to rendezvous with a guerrilla group; Guatemalan poet Otto René Castillo, according to an account published by the Casa, died in 1967 while serving as a propaganda officer for the Guatemalan Rebel Armed Forces guerrilla group; noted Salvadoran poet-author Roque Dalton, who had a long and warm association with the Casa, died in 1975 in internecine fighting within his rebel movement; Nicaraguan priest-poet Ernesto Cardenal, another friend of the Casa, became an active member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front and was given a cabinet post after the ouster of Somoza; and many others over the years who had links to the Casa contributed in some form to the fulfillment of the Cuban armed struggle doctrine. Many more have willingly aided Cuba in less dramatic but perhaps more useful pursuits; the staffs of the Casa, Prensa Latina, and Radio Havana, in particular, have profited in this fashion.

Never quite confident of her role as a cultural personality, Haydée Santamaría, according to accounts by knowledgeable observers, left much of the Casa's day-to-day business to others whose personal prestige helped it develop into one of the most influential cultural organizations in Latin America. Noted Cuban leftist intellectuals who staffed it or linked their reputations to it were joined by foreign intellectuals such as Argentine Marxist philosopher Ezekial Martínez Estrada and Guatemala's Manuel Galich. The latter, a leader of the Guatemalan Communist Party who was Foreign Minister during the Arbenz government, was appointed Assistant Director of the Casa and also headed the Casa's Theater Department. Noted Uruguayan leftist author Mario Benedetti became director of the Casa's Center for

Literary Research when it was created in 1967 and later gave way temporarily to Colombian writer Oscar Collazos.

One observer, who in 1977 wrote a sympathetic study of the Casa and interviewed several of its top figures, noted that the Casa's history "is the chronicle of the efforts by Cuban and Latin American vanguard intellectuals to ally, unite, and integrate intellectual support for Cuba and the Latin American revolution," and credited the Casa's magazine with serving as a forum for Latin American writers and as a mobilization center for the region's more militant intellectuals. This description of the Casa's mission remains true today.

Performing Arts

It appears that any element of the performing arts in Cuba is considered an appropriate vehicle for disseminating propaganda—an ostensibly innocent messenger that, through its polished performances, conveys a favorable impression about the Cuban social system. The Cuban National Ballet, captained by prima ballerina Alicia Alonso, is the flagship of this segment of the propaganda machinery, and has performed in many parts of the world from Hanoi and Moscow to the Kennedy Center in Washington.

Alonso, who is about 60 years old, is the ballet's director and principal choreographer. She earned international acclaim in the 1950s and 1960s and she has shaped the National Ballet into a respected representative of the Castro regime. Her statements and actions over the past 24 years indicate clearly that she is deeply committed to Castro's revolution and she continues to lend her personal prestige to it.

Other performing groups that are sent abroad to enhance Cuban prestige include the National Folkloric Ensemble, the National Symphony Orchestra, and, more frequently, smaller teams of actors, singers, and musicians such as the Cubana de Acero theater group; the Moncada musical group; the Camagüey Ballet Company, the Aragón Orchestra; the Irakere jazz rock band; the Papines popular music quartet; the Nueva Trova musical group; and others. Their mission is to help erase the image of the Castro regime as a promoter of subversion and revolution, and convince their audiences that Cuba merits closer bilateral ties.

Athletes and Sports Teams

Cuban sports teams and athletes are also sent abroad as good-will emissaries and as evidence of the alleged superiority to the Cuban system. Because of the stress Havana places on the politics of international competition, there is great pressure on Cuban participants to win, especially when matched against US athletes. A loss to a US amateur baseball team, for example, is a source of great embarrassment. The

Castro regime invests heavily in its athletic programs and its huge representations at the Central American and Caribbean Games, a regional competition held every four years, dwarf the delegation from neighboring countries. The acquisition of masses of medals is given high priority because the Cubans realize that the country that dominates such athletic extravaganzas usually gets the broadest press coverage.

Because international-class athletes such as boxer Teófilo Stevenson and runner Alberto Juantorena can capture headlines in the international press by defeating world-class competitors, they are looked upon as important national assets by the Castro regime. Like their counterparts in the performing arts, they establish links with the "outside world," earn international respect for Cuba, pave the way for increased contacts, and help to overcome the Castro regime's isolation.

Losers, on the other hand, are politically untenable. Even though Cuban athletes won 173 gold, 17 silver, and 40 bronze medals during the Central American and Caribbean Games in Cuba in August 1982, there was high-level disappointment in Havana because the baseball team won none. As a result, the regime canceled plans to send the team to the world amateur baseball championship competition in South Korea the following month. Fielding no team at all was considered better than fielding one that would likely lose and thus stain Cuba's reputation.

Cinema

While athletes and performing artists help to create a general impression that Cuba's system promotes artistic expression and athletic excellence, the cinema industry is much more directly propagandist. Cuban films pointedly address political themes and film festivals as a matter of course base the awarding of prizes on political content. A third-rate film that endorses violent revolution or disparages the US and other anti-Communist nations is certain to find favor over a first-rate production that is apolitical.

At the Fourth International Festival of the New Latin American Film, held in Havana in December 1982, politics and ideology played the dominant role as usual. First prize for a documentary film, according to the Cuban media, was awarded to *Cartas de Morazán* (*Letters from Morazán*), a war movie prepared by the Radio Venceremos propagandists of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front, the Salvadoran insurgent group. A similar award in the animated cartoon category was given to *Crónicas del Caribe* (*Chronicles of the Caribbean*), a film jointly produced in Mexico and Puerto Rico that allegedly exposed the economic penetration of "Yankee imperialism" in the Caribbean. A US-produced film, *Américas in Transition*, also got a first prize for "analyzing US meddling" in Latin American in the twentieth

century. First prize for fiction went to *Tiempo de Revancha* (*Time for Revenge*), a film that attacked big mining consortiums in Argentina as exploiters of the working class.

This annual festival, first held in December 1979, is a production of the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC) of the Ministry of Culture. Its pro-Communist mission is clear; ICAIC had stated publicly that the festival's purpose is, in its own verbose description "to promote the regular meeting of Latin American film stars who with their work enrich the artistic culture of our countries, contributing to the redemption and affirmation of our identity and the defense of national values and common characteristics of our peoples in the face of imperialist cultural domination and deforming penetration. . . ."

Films produced in Cuba provide much the same diet of politically slanted material designed to justify armed struggle, glorify violent revolution, provide ideological indoctrination, bolster Cuba's international standing, and undermine the democratic process. The film entitled *No*, for example, is a documentary denouncing alleged US plans to manufacture the neutron bomb; *And the Night Became a Rainbow*, by top Cuban filmmaker Santiago Alverez, covered the visit of Fidel Castro to Ethiopia in 1978; *Fifty-five Brothers* is a full-length film about the return to Cuba from the US of a group of young Cuban exiles; *Pablo*, portrays in heroic terms the exploits of one of Cuba's first Communists in the 1920s and 1930s; *The Survivors* describes how the bourgeoisie theoretically disappears as a class in the revolutionary society.

The public distribution of Cuban films is limited, although they are shown in European and some US theaters, as well as in Latin America, and some have even received awards at such noted forums as the Cannes Film Festival. In addition, Cuban films on occasion are shown privately by various Cuban diplomatic missions or Friendship Institutes for selected audiences. Nevertheless, they do not have to reach a mass audience to provide a noteworthy return on Havana's investment. The Castro regime is probably satisfied, however, that the films receive significant exposure among foreign intellectuals, many of whom can influence public opinion either through the media or through their own writings or other cultural activities.

International Meetings, Conferences, and Symposia

Havana often hosts international gatherings of various kinds to focus world opinion on specific issues or to promote Cuban prestige. To accommodate such events, the Castro regime in the late 1970s built a Palace of Conventions in a Havana suburb at a cost of over 23 million pesos, according to the Cuban media.

These meetings, manipulated to generate propaganda and create a favorable image of Cuba, range from small affairs—for example, a modest regional conference of professionals in a narrow field—to a major conclaves such as the sixth Nonaligned Movement summit in 1979, the eleventh World Festival of Youth and Students in 1978, the Havana Cultural Congress of 1968, and Tricontinental Conference of 1966 (Figure 5). Some, like the Tricontential and the subsequent conference of the Latin American Peoples Solidarity Organization, which were held to set the stage for Che Guevara's guerrilla war in the Bolivian Andes in 1967, have very specific goals; other, such as those



Figure 5. Castro's efforts to project an image of respectability led him to assume the chairmanship of the Nonaligned Movement in 1979.

Havana cosponsors with the United Nations, the Nonaligned Movement, or other international agencies, have the more general aim of bolstering Cuban prestige, presenting Cuba as a model for development, and developing common propaganda themes that range from the vituperative to the subliminal.

In meetings where Cuba does not control the invitations, such as those of international organizations, Havana adapts by abusing its position as host to neutralize potentially uncooperative delegations. One troublesome delegation to the Nonaligned Summit in 1979, for example, was assigned housing so remote from the palace as to hamper seriously its liaison with other delegations.

Because to the Cubans these meetings have political rationale, cost apparently is a secondary consideration. In 1979, for example, Cuba sent one of its passenger-cargo ships, the XX Aniversario, to St. Vincent, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Grenada, and Guyana to bring 211 artists, performers, and intellectuals to Cuba for the Third Caribbean Festival of the Creative Arts (CARIFESTA 79). The Cuban national airline also made charter flights to Venezuela, The Bahamas, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, and Mexico on similar missions. In all, 29 countries and island political entities, by Havana's count, participated in CARIFESTA 79, and over a quarter of a million people attended its 724 performances in Havana alone. The Cuban press claims it had over 500 journalists, photographers, and technicians covering the festivities.

Until the Cubans sponsored the event, CARIFESTA had been an apolitical cultural affair, sponsored every three years by various Caribbean governments. Havana, however, used it to organize a "Symposium on Caribbean Cultural Identity" and issue a declaration denouncing various facets of imperialism. Although some 2,100 artists, performers, and intellectuals took part in CARIFESTA 79, only 21—four Cubans and 17 visitors—actively participated in the symposium and all appear to have been carefully picked to ensure the proper pro-Communist, pro-Cuban bias of the declaration.

Another meeting to enlist the support of intellectuals on behalf of Cuban policy was the "Meeting of Intellectuals for the Sovereignty of the Peoples of 'Our America,'" held in Havana from 4 through 7 September 1981 under the sponsorship of the Casa de las Américas. According to Havana's own description of the event, some 300 delegates from Latin America, the Caribbean, the US, and Europe "denounced the deforming cultural penetration—of which the great American fatherland is a victim—by the imperialist government of the United States, which is the creator, manipulator, and financier of various sophisticated means of interference that reduce and aim to destroy the sovereignty of the majority of our countries. . ." (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Havana sponsored the Third Latin American Seminar of Journalists as a platform issuing new denunciations of the United States from 7 to 17 August 1978.

Havana used the meeting to organize the "Standing Committee of Intellectuals for the Sovereignty of the Peoples of 'Our America,'" a front group that was founded to perpetuate the impression that the region's leading thinkers are solidly united with Cuba. The group is chaired by the president of Cuba's Casa del las Américas and meets periodically to issue what have become standard denunciations of the policies on hemispheric governments not aligned with Cuba.

Personal Visits

Officials of the Castro regime make effective use of the personal attention they grant to visiting individuals and small, specialized groups of people—industrialists, legislators, media luminaries, religious leaders, academicians, government or party officials—whose ranks or position makes them useful to Cuban interests. This special attention is often designed to complement propaganda campaigns and generate favorable press coverage.

Castro, for example, has on many occasions met with US and other foreign personages to explain Cuban policies with apparent sincerity and reasonableness that he expects will influence his visitors' views (Figure 7). He is a consummate actor who, especially when dealing with visitors on an individual basis, can put on a remarkably convincing display of candor and idealism that rarely fails to make a deep impression on his guests. With favored visitors who may be particularly useful to him, he engages in special activities such as hunting or spearfishing intended to create a sense of familiarity that he hopes will pay dividends. On several occasions, Castro has done special favors—releasing specific prisoners from Cuban jails, for example—to establish goodwill with influential people.



Figure 7. Fidel Castro "jawbones" with Cuban exile leaders from Miami, 1978.

Such visits with Castro and other high-ranking Cuban officials frequently yield good press coverage. Several of the 17 Costa Rican legislators who spent a week in Cuba in mid-January in 1983—a visit highlighted by an interview with Castro—made comments favorable to Cuba upon their return home, and thereby gave Radio Havana ammunition for its broadcasts promoting the Cuban position on Central America and on the resumption of normal relations between Havana and San Jose. The visit and the favorable media attention it precipitated put the Monge administration on the defense and cast Castro in the role of a responsible chief of state reluctant to offend his neighbors. A Spanish news agency, for example, reported that, in discussing frictions between Costa Rica and Nicaragua with the legislators, Castro "asked to be excused from interceding with the Sandinista government" on Costa Rica's behalf because "he cannot interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries."

The Castro regime has been using this intimate type of person-to-person propaganda freely in its efforts to generate pressure on Washington regarding Central America. At the same time that a Cuban campaign for negotiations on El Salvador was getting underway, Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, a member of the party's ruling Political Bureau and Castro's chief foreign policy adviser, headed a team of foreign policy officials who played host to a group of US academicians and journalists in April 1982 to create an impression that Cuba was willing to contribute to and abide by a negotiated political solution in Central America. Havana had no intention of abandoning the insurgents in El Salvador, but recognized the need to mobilize world opinion and channel it in such a way to prevent a perceived drift of the

US toward intervention not only in El Salvador but in Nicaragua, and perhaps, Cuba as well. Subsequently, articles by the visiting journalists appeared in a number of US newspapers reflecting the Cubans' propaganda line. One such article, by two respected academicians, argued strongly for accepting a Cuban call for a Havana-Washington dialogue. This is exactly what the Cubans expected their hospitality to produce (Figure 8).

More recently, Havana has been trying to improve formal relations with Colombia. Castro invited former President Alfonso López Michelsen, head of Colombia's Liberal Party, to Cuba to spend several days vacationing with him in mid-January. In giving the ex-President his personal attention, judging from subsequent Colombian press accounts, Castro assured himself of access to influential figures in Colombian politics.

Castro's desire to maintain excellent relations with the government of Socialist Prime Minister Olof Palme in Sweden, according to a Western press report from Havana, is one of the reasons why the Cuban President has developed such a warm personal relationship with the Swedish Ambassador in Havana, Anders Sandstrom. Not long after they first met in 1980, Castro's yacht "accidentally" came upon Sandstrom as he was scuba-diving in waters south of Cuba and the Swedish envoy was invited aboard. Castro and Sandstrom went diving together and afterwards spent 17 hours together discussing a variety of subjects. They subsequently went scuba-diving and spearfishing on several occasions; Sandstrom is one of the few ambassadors who has direct access to Castro and has had the unique privilege of having a six-page article published in Cuba's most important news magazine.



Figure 8. President Castro holds a press conference for US journalists and CBS-TV in October 1979.

Miscellaneous Propaganda Organs

The Castro regime has a variety of other propaganda agencies and vehicles. One is the Executive Secretariat of the African, Asian, and Latin American Peoples Solidarity Organization (AALAPSO), founded at the Tricontinental Conference in early 1966. Although it purports to be an independent international organization, its staffing and activities over the years leave no doubt that the Secretariat is actually an agency of the Cuban Government used as an outlet for propaganda aimed at strengthening Cuba's links to revolutionary movements abroad and perpetuating the Che Guevara guerrilla cult.

Every other month, AALAPSO publishes for worldwide distribution a book-length magazine—with editions in English, French, and Spanish—containing articles by representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the South West Africa Peoples Organization, the African National Congress, the Frente Polisario, and other revolutionary organizations and Communist parties. The AALAPSO is headquartered in Havana, and is headed by Cuban Communist Pary Central Committee member Belba Hernández, a heroine of the Cuban revolution. In addition to the magazine, the AALAPSO sponsors "solidarity" meetings in Cuban factories and ministries, issues statements to the press, sends representatives to international meetings to push the Cuban line, and entertains foreign radicals when they visit Havana. It also prints and distributes colorful posters that glorify armed struggle and attack the US.

A similar propaganda agency is the Continental Organization of Latin American Students (OCLAE). OCLAE operates out of Havana and publishes a monthly magazine with articles supporting revolution and discrediting the US. Much of OCLAE's propaganda focuses on promoting independence for Puerto Rico. Like AALAPSO, OCLAE had its origin in the Cuban effort in the mid-1960s to organize international support for the Guevara operation in Bolivia. With the death of Guevara and the failure of his expedition in 1967, however, both agencies lost their international character and became little more than Cuban propaganda mills, which is their current status.

On 31 March 1959, within three months of assuming power Castro established the Imprenta Nacional de Cuba, a publishing house created to spearhead the new government's propaganda efforts in the field of literature. The organization, according to the Cuban media, has since grown into a major industry consisting of a number of large publishing houses that have turned out some 17,000 titles and over 500 million copies of various kinds of books and pamphlets over the past 24 years. The giants of the industry are the Juan Marinello Polygraphic Combine in Guantanamo, which opened with equipment from East Germany in 1977, and a similar plant in Palma Soriano, which began operations in

early 1983. The former has a capacity to produce 20 million books per year while the latter has a capacity for 30 million. These expanded capabilities now so exceed Cuban needs that Havana is soliciting printing business from abroad.

While much of the output of these plants consists of textbooks, technical manuals, and other materials for domestic consumption, a significant amount is propaganda, much of it intended for consumption abroad; by Havana's own claim, Cuban books are now distributed in more than 60 countries. Some are the traditional works by Marx, Lenin, and other ideologues, and some are by such typically pro-Cuban Latin American writers are Argentina's Gregorio Selser, Uruguay's Eduardo Galeano, and Guatemala's Guillermo Toriello and Manuel Galich.

Cuban books are distributed through direct sales from the Cuban Book Institute in Havana; cultural agreements with other governments, universities, or cultural institutions; printing arrangements with foreign publishers; and in various other ways. In late 1982 and early 1983, for example, the ICAP arranged for its Venezuelan-Cuban Friendship Institute to hold Cuban book exhibitions in Caracas, Maracaibo, and San Cristóbal. Some 600 titles were available and, according to the Cuban press, the exhibits were attended by well over 120,000 visitors.

The Castro regime also uses other organizations and publications to carry its propaganda message. Some are ostensibly independent but, judging from their activities and political bias, are under Havana's strong influence if not outright covert control. The Latin America Federation of Journalists (FELAP), for example, was formed as a result of vigorous Cuban lobbying with leftist journalists of the region to counter the influence of the independent Interamerican Press Association. FELAP, which has close links to such Soviet front groups as the Prague-based International Organization of Journalists and the World Peace Council, is used by Havana to focus international attention on abuses of freedom of the press by rightist governments of the hemisphere as well as to attack the US.

Another front group is the Managua-based Anti-Imperialist Tribunal of our America (TANA). Founded on 23 September 1981 as the Anti-Imperialist Tribunal of Central America and the Caribbean (TACC), the organization did not have overt links to Cuba until mid-1982 when a local chapter was established in Havana. Havana's influence, however, is clear. TANA's president is Guatemalan Guillermo Toriello, who has had close ties to the Castro regime for more than two decades, and its executive secretary in Venezuelan Freddy Balzán, who for years worked in Cuba's Prensa Latina office in Caracas. TANA publishes the monthly magazine *Soberanía* devoted to "denouncing imperialism and its crime" and "identifying the agents of the CIA" in the region. The magazine's editorial board includes Phillip

Agee, a US citizen noted for his efforts to expose CIA employees, as well as several Cubans and a claque of leftist writers and cultural figures.

Havana has close ties to the Mexico City-based monthly *Cuadernos del Tercer Mundo*, a stridently pro-Cuban magazine that never deviates from the Cuban policy line. Its English-language edition was short-lived but it continues to publish in Spanish (printed in Mexico City and Lima) and Portuguese (printed in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro) with distribution in Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

Havana has long had close contact with leftist Mexican journalist Mario Menéndez Rodríguez. Menéndez' magazine *Por Esto* claims to be an independent weekly, but its links to Havana are readily apparent from its generous Cuban advertising and its list of Cuban-associated staff personnel and "collaborators."

Training Foreign Journalists

In 1976, the head of Cuba's professional organization for newsmen, Ernesto Vera, announced the founding by the Cuban Journalists Union (UPEC) of a journalists, "improvement school" that would accept newsmen from all of Latin America. By 1982, candidates from Africa were also being accepted and in mid-1983 a group of 11 Angolans who had been attending a year-long course graduated and returned home. Their course, according to a Luanda newspaper, "emphasized political training and journalistic techniques. . . . The problems entailed in the realm of the ideological struggle between decadent capitalism and ascending socialism in this important field were also examined."

The Cuban Communist Party's Ñico López National Cadre School also has a variety of courses including two entitled "Political Training for Journalists" and "Political Training for Propagandists." The July 1981 graduating class, according to the Cuban press, included 69 foreign graduates from 17 countries of Africa and Latin America. Press reports also indicate that one of the measures Havana took to gain influence in Grenada and Suriname after the two countries' respective "revolutions" was to bring teams of local journalists to Cuba for training. The courses were offered either at the UPEC school or the party's Ñico López school.

Conclusions

Fidel Castro's skillful use of the few propaganda assets available to him during his guerrilla war against Batista, in our opinion, contributed in a major way to his victory and was an augury of the methods he would use so successfully after coming to power.

It is clear from the statements of Antonio Pérez Herrero and other top spokesmen for the Castro regime that a major effort will continue to

be made to expand the propaganda apparatus in certain key areas (Figure 9). Although economic reality will hamper this effort, important investments are likely to be made to:

- Improve the availability of Cuban books and magazines abroad.
- Open new Prensa Latina bureaus and increase the number of subscribers to Prensa Latina services.
- Help allies develop their own propaganda outlets for both domestic and international audiences.
- Train foreign journalists so as to utilize their skills and opportunities on behalf of Cuba in non-Marxist countries.
- Establish and promote ostensibly independent news gathering and professional organizations of leftists to provide competition



Figure 9. Some of the many publications produced in Cuba or exploited by its propaganda apparatus.

for—and reduce the influence of—Western news agencies, radio stations, and journalists.

Havana probably has placed high priority, for example, on helping Nicaragua organize an international shortwave broadcasting service and on promoting such groups as Salpress—the news agency of the Salvadoran insurgents—and similar organizations formed to publicize the activities of insurgents and serve as propaganda vehicles for leftist exiles. Salpress, according to Havana Radio, was formed in Mexico City in December 1980 just prior to the start of the January 1981 insurgent offensive, and now boasts branch offices in six other countries, five correspondents serving with guerrilla groups in El Salvador, and membership in the Nonaligned Movement's news agency organization. It presumably has already received considerable Cuban assistance and guidance.

In addition, we expect Cuba will try to use its membership in the Latin American Features News Agency (ALASEI)—formed in 1983—to ensure that the agency's output has a radical left, antidemocratic slant. ALASEI, which is based in Mexico City, is a joint effort by 12 countries of the region to form a news agency, which many of them feel will focus greater attention on the area than have US and European agencies. According to Prensa Latina's ranking commentator, ALASEI "will enable the region to confront with its own mechanisms the systematic deformation and disinformation of Latin American reality that exists today," a clear signal that Havana expects ALASEI to counter, if not displace, UPI, AP, AFP, EFE, Reuter, and other Western agencies in Latin America.

Some of Havana's future ventures in propaganda are certain to be joint efforts with other Communist countries, which will ease some of the economic burden on Havana. This is in keeping with a resolution approved at the last party congress stating that "In view of the breadth and complexity of the ideological struggle, it is ever more important to coordinate our information activities with those of the Communist parties of the other sister socialist republics." The Cubans will look to the International Organization of Journalists and other Soviet front groups for support and may succeed in getting some Latin American governments to contribute to agencies and publications that have the "proper political slant."

Castro may have the propaganda apparatus temper its invective toward the US from time to time for tactical reasons—this sometimes happens while he assesses the intentions toward Cuba of incoming administrations in Washington—but such a muting has always proved to be temporary. He invariably finds an excuse to revert to normal animosity.

Castro depends on Prensa Latina, Radio Havana, ICAP, and the various newspapers and news magazines of his propaganda machine to promote Cuban policy objectives on a day-to-day basis. It is clear, however, that he is also intent on using other elements of the machine—the Casa de las Américas and his other publishing houses, for example—to create a broad, permanent body of literature that, through its scholarship, eloquence, and sheer volume, will influence current and future generations of Latin Americans and peoples of the Caribbean. The aim of this long-term propaganda effort is to establish a documented record of an irremediably flawed non-Communist bloc. Castro probably expects this growing body of literature to cause problems for non-Communist countries long after he himself is out of the political picture.

Castro's propaganda empire, however, does make mistakes. Radio Havana's slanted coverage of the Sendero Luminoso guerrilla group, for example, has created frictions between Cuba and Peru. Influential visitors attending international meetings in Havana—including, according to press reports, some chiefs-of-state at the Nonaligned Movement's summit in 1979—have been alienated by the Castro regime's heavy-handed efforts to use them as windowdressing for Cuba's pro-Soviet foreign policy activities.

The huge investment Castro has made in his empire of radio stations, news agencies, publishing houses, and other publicity vehicles attests to the high regard he has for propaganda as a political weapon. We believe it also explains his great concern over the prospects for US broadcasts to Cuba. He understands clearly that propaganda is a two-edged sword.

The Cuban propaganda machine, enjoying close association with its Soviet counterpart, ample funding, and competent personnel, will remain an important negative factor working for Cuban and Soviet interests throughout the world.

Annex

Methodology of Cuban Ideological Penetration

Ideological penetration is an important adjunct of Cuba's self-assigned mission of promoting Marxist revolution. Ideological penetration embraces all forms of human and institutional interaction and transcends all segments of a target nation's population and dynamics. In practice it takes advantage of natural and widely diversified access, outwardly benign purposes, and the means for concealment of a finely structured central direction. Conclusions as to Cuba's methods of ideological penetration can be drawn from a composite of information acquired from a variety of sources such as, interviews of Cuban emigres and foreign elements knowledgeable of the Cuban Government's interworkings, study of Cuba's mass communications media, observation of Cuba's wide-ranging cultural and other exchange programs in action, and juxtaposition of Cuba's penetration tactics with those practiced by the USSR and other Communist countries. Cuba's approach, however, is notable for its efficacy and intensity by virtue of its capacity for bridging classic Communist thinking into the *latino* milieu of which Cuba is a part.

- Fidel Castro, alone or in consultation with one or more of his closest advisers, designates a particular country or region as a target and calls for an ideological penetration plan.
- A meeting of top foreign policy officials is then held. Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, and—depending on the geographical location of the target—American Department Chief Manuel Piñeiro or General Department of Foreign Relations Chief Jesús Montané are the usual principals. Either Piñeiro or Montané usually is designated as the overall coordinator of the planning, and is tasked with collecting all pertinent information available on the target.
- The planning coordinator then meets with other key officials, namely:
  - — Interior Minister Ramiro Valdés, who gets an area analysis of the target from his chief of intelligence and a list of the target country's nationals living in Cuba from his counterintelligence chief.
  - — Foreign Minister Ididoro Malmierca, who tasks the Cuban Embassy in the target for a country analysis (if there is no resident Cuban diplomatic mission, the tasking is levied on the

Ministry's resources at home and abroad). The country analysis focuses on the target's intellectual community, classifying key people according to politial leanings; provides a study of all cultural areas, especially music and theater; provides a separate study on the universities; lists the best actors, musicians, and other performers and analyzes local cultural tastes to identify which Cuban cultural figures would be well received.

— Culture Minister Armando Hart, who provides a list of Cuban cultural figures who could play a role in the penetration plan.

— Orlando Fundora López, chief of the party's Revolutionary Orientation Department, who provides information obtained through Prensa Latina and other organizations and publications under his department's control.

- Upon receiving the contributions from these key individuals, the coordinator collates the reporting into a general ideological penetration plan which he submits to the Political Bureau for approval. A member of the Political Bureau is then named to supervise all subsequent activity; this frequently is Armando Hart because cultural activity plays such a major role.
- The designated Political Bureau member and the coordinator then oversee the drafting of a specific penetration plan—a task that can take as much as six months—that includes specific names, dates, itineraries, and costs. Various party and government offices are directly involved:

— The Culture Ministry sends a representative to the target country to identify contacts there and find out what cultural events have been scheduled in which Cuban performers or intellectuals can take part. The ministry also begins inviting intellectuals and performers from the target country to participate in various activities in Cuba.

— The party's America Department pursues its own direct contacts with the target country's intellectuals.

— The Foreign Ministry focuses on identifying political contacts in the target country that Havana can use to gain support for—or reduce opposition to—Cuban cultural initiatives. The Ministry—in conjunction with the State Committee for Economic Cooperation—also develops specific plans for offering economic assistance to the country.

— The Revolutionary Orientation Department begins preparing articles on the target country's culture for publication in Cuba outlets and develops media contacts who can arrange for the

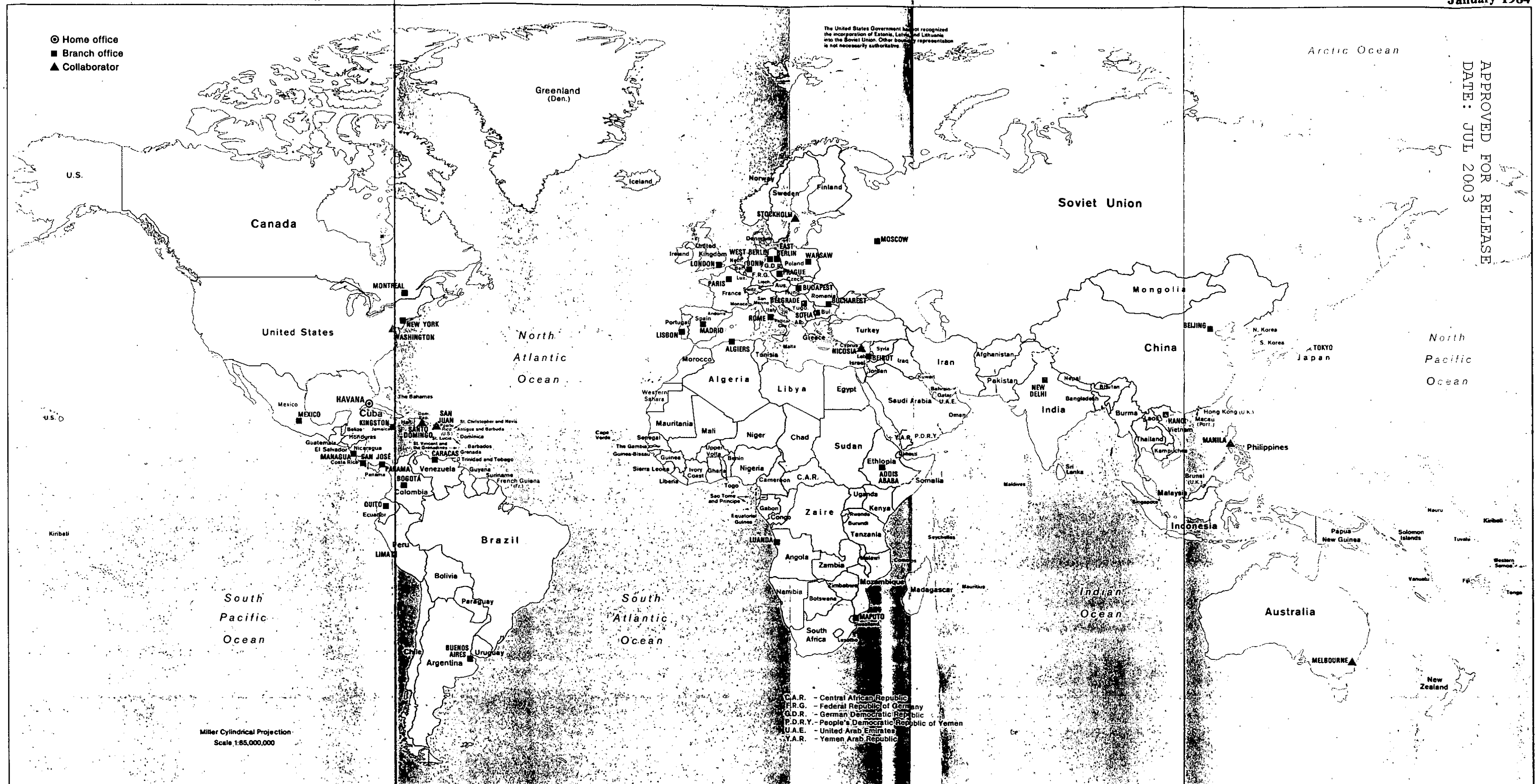
placement of articles on Cuban performers and intellectuals who will be visiting the country.

— Virtually any Cuban entity can be tasked. The Cuban Journalists Union may be called upon to identify foreign newsmen who would be willing to cooperate. The Cuban Women's Federation may draw up a list of prominent women or women's organizations in the target country that could be exploited. The Cuban National Assembly may prepare a roster of the target's legislators who are favorably disposed toward Cuba. The Cuban Public Health Ministry may identify physicians or medical associations in the target country that seem susceptible to Cuban cultivation. The Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions may pinpoint labor leaders and unions that could help. The resources of any organization that has contacts or information on potential contacts in the target country—the National Association of Cuban Economists, the National Association of Small Farmers, the Cuban Academy of Scientists, the National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists, the Movement for Peace and Solidarity Among Peoples, the Cuban Institute of Motion Picture Art and Industry, and others—can be drawn into the process.

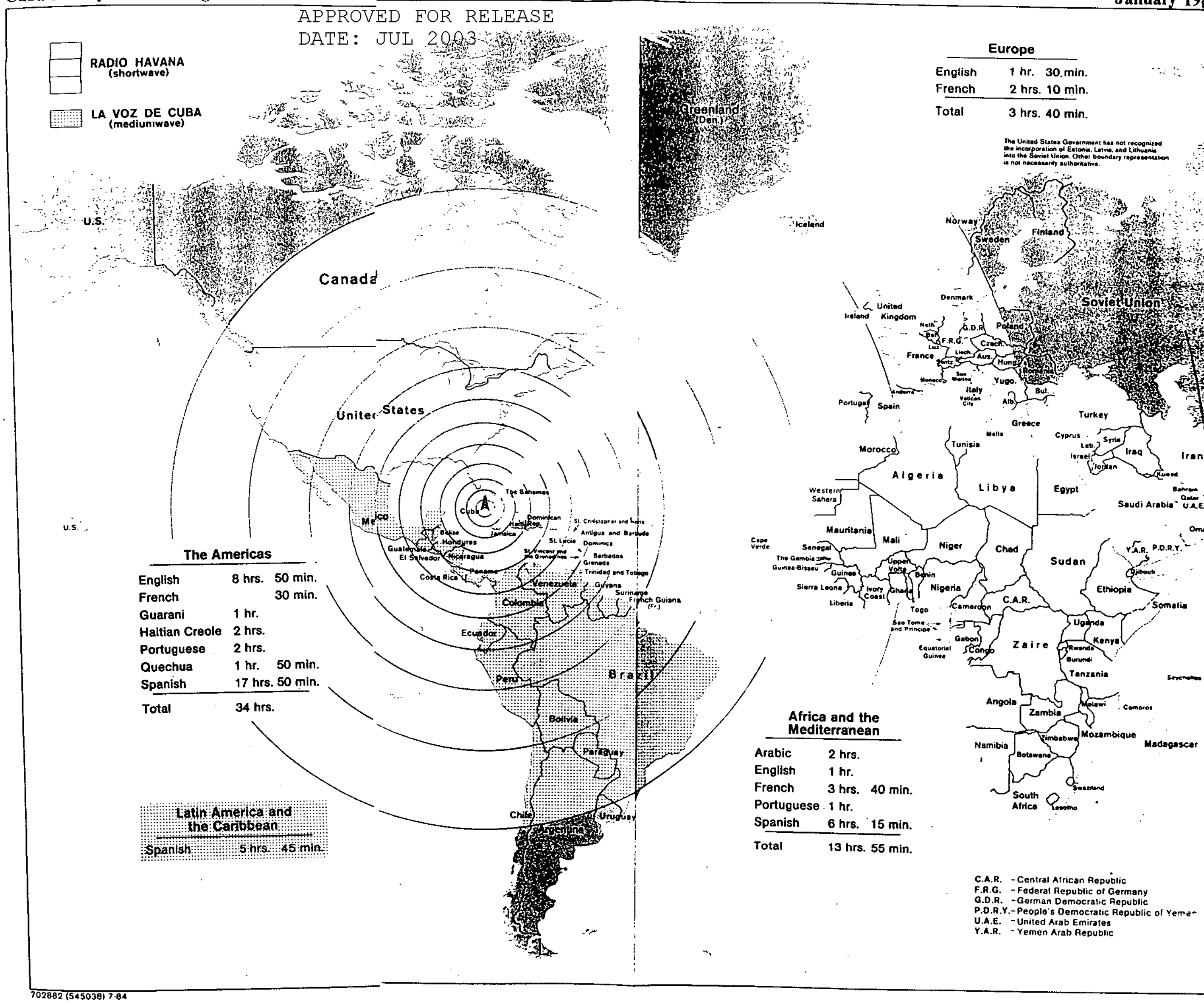
- In the final stage, a budget is prepared and, after approval or modification by Fidel Castro, funds are dispersed to the various offices charged with implementing the plan. The Political Bureau regularly reviews the plan and its accomplishments.

Branch Offices and Collaborators of Prensa Latina

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